



EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Selection of the European Capital of Culture 2017 in Denmark

**THE SELECTION PANEL'S
FINAL SELECTION REPORT**

Copenhagen,
September 2012

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019 (hereinafter referred to as “the Decision”), a competition has been established to nominate a Danish city to the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) title for the year 2017.

The managing authority of the ECOC competition in Denmark is the Danish Ministry of Culture. The procedure for implementing this Decision in Denmark was set out in the document “Rules of Procedure – Competition for the 2017 European Capital of Culture title in Denmark” signed by the Danish Minister for Culture in October 2011 (hereinafter referred to as “the Rules”).

In accordance with the Decision and the Rules, the Danish Ministry of Culture is responsible for the organisation of the ECOC competition including the appointment of national experts, organisation of pre-selection and final selection meetings and coordination of visits of the representatives of the Selection Panel to the cities.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Decision, the Selection Panel was appointed by the Danish Minister for Culture in October 2011. It was composed of 7 independent experts nominated by the European institutions (2 by the European Parliament, 2 by the Council of the European Union, 2 by the European Commission and 1 by the Committee of the Regions) and 6 independent experts nominated by the Danish Minister of Culture. The Panel elected Manfred Gaulhofer as the Chair and Christine Buhl Andersen as the Vice-Chair. All members of the Selection Panel have signed declarations of non-conflict of interest concerning their evaluation of the proposals made by the candidate cities.

On 31 December 2011 the mandates of Danuta Glondys and Andreas Wiesand (both members who participated in the pre-selection stage) expired, and Steve Green and Jordi Pardo were appointed to replace them.

2. Pre-Selection

The following cities responded to the call for applications for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2017 announced by the Danish Ministry for Culture, by submitting their applications before the final closing date on 30 September 2011:

Aarhus and Sønderborg.

Under Article 7 of the Decision, which deals with the pre-selection stage, the Panel assessed these applications against the criteria stated in Article 4 of the Decision. The pre-selection meeting took place in Copenhagen on 25 November 2011, and the panel recommended to short-list both cities for the final selection phase.

Following the pre-selection meeting, the Panel submitted a report to the Danish Ministry of Culture and the European Commission with recommendations concerning the applications made by the short-listed cities.

3. Final Selection

Both Aarhus and Sønderborg responded to the call for completed applications for the title of European Capital of Culture 2017 announced by the Ministry of Culture on 23 December 2011 by submitting their application before the final closing date on 15 June 2012.

A delegation of four panel members visited the two short-listed cities in preparation of the final selection meeting: Aarhus (22 August 2012) and Sønderborg (23 August 2012). Both cities were allocated exactly the same time for the visit.

The delegation consisted of the following members of the Selection Panel: Ms. Christine Buhl Andersen, Ms Katrine Ring, Sir Jeremy Isaacs and Mr Constantin Chiriac. The delegation was accompanied by a representative of the European Commission (Ms Jacqueline Pacaud) and representatives of the Ministry of Culture from the Danish Agency for Culture (Mr Christian Svane and Ms Lise-Lotte Bjerre).

The final selection meeting took place in Copenhagen on 24 August 2012. All the 13 panel members participated in the meeting. Representatives of the European Commission (Ms Ann Branch, Head of the Culture – Programme and Actions Unit and Ms Jacqueline Pacaud, manager of the European Capital of Culture action) and the Danish Agency for Culture were present as observers.

Before the meetings with the candidate cities, the four delegates who participated in the visits to the cities, extensively reported back to the other Panel members.

Then, both Aarhus and Sønderborg presented their revised bids to the Panel. The two cities were represented by local authorities at the level of Mayor, directors of cultural institutions, educational institutions, the business sector, advisors, experts, and representatives from each of the artistic teams of ECOC 2017 (a list of the participants from both cities is enclosed). The final selection meeting consisted of a 30-minute presentation by the representatives of each pre-selected city, followed by a 60-minute question and answer session which focused on all aspects of the proposals.

During its internal debate, the Panel carried out an in-depth assessment of the information provided by the visits and the applications by the candidate cities as well as their oral presentations and answers provided to the experts' questions during the hearings. It was clear to the Panel, that considerable effort had been made by the cities to update their applications in line with the recommendations put forward by the Panel in the pre-selection report. To evaluate the bids, the Panel:

- thoroughly assessed the extent to which the candidate cities met the objectives of the European Capital of Culture event, as set out in Article 3 of the Decision and

the criteria defined in Article 4 of the Decision: “the European Dimension” and the “City and Citizens” dimension;

- considered the overall capacity of the cities to ensure the implementation of the event, notably the governance, the budget, the support of local authorities and the business sector;
- assessed the accuracy and quality of the responses provided by the cities to the questions included in the application form.

Following the final selection meeting (at 4.30 p.m. on 24 August 2012), a press conference was held at the Danish Agency for Culture to announce the result of the selection process. The Minister for Culture, Mr Uffe Elbæk, introduced the press conference.

4. The Evaluation by the Selection Panel

The Panel noted that the selection of the Danish European Capital of Culture 2017 had been a difficult choice due to the intensive and tough competition between the two candidate cities, Aarhus and Sønderborg. Both cities, while proposing very different approaches for the ECOC event, provided the Panel with two very convincing bid documents that demonstrated evidence of a thorough planning taking into account the multitude of aspects needed to be considered when hosting such an important event as the European Capital of Culture. The Panel emphasised that the great effort invested by both cities would be beneficial to each one, whatever the final result of the competition would be, by strengthening the role of culture in the city’s development strategy, stimulating and enriching local cultural life. The Panel further noted the careful work undertaken by each city to implement the recommendations formulated in its pre-selection report.

The Panel highlighted the following characteristics of Aarhus's and Sønderborg's bids.

Aarhus

The motto of the bid was “Re-think” with a programme focusing on 3 directions:

- The City
- Arts and Creativity
- Values

This theme referred to the fact that Aarhus would like to redefine itself as a European city instead of merely a Danish city or even just a city in Europe. More precisely, it pointed out the need for Aarhus to further involving the citizens, students, artists and cultural operators in the long term development of the city. All the stakeholders, together with the population of Aarhus and its region as well as the business sector, should work together for this project: the Aarhus delegation specified that 2017 would be a collective effort, a unique opportunity for the urban, social and economic development of the city while developing its European connections through artistic projects and communication.

The initiatives of young people, the creative educational programmes, and the creative hubs engaging people and artists to actively involve themselves in the development of the cultural programme of the ECOC event, and more generally the consistency and “bottom up” process of the project were important assets.

The Panel noted that Aarhus had a clear, well-prepared and competent plan for the ECOC 2017, with commitment from a broad range of interested parties (the regional level, educational institutions, the business sector, local artists, media, etc.) and with the capacity to host such a visible event lasting an entire year. The Panel also noted that Aarhus' authorities are already implementing an active cultural policy including the renovation of buildings for cultural purposes, for intercultural activity and new cultural centres. The city has a vibrant cultural life.

Additionally, the leadership of the city and the management team demonstrated experience, knowledge and the ability to organise and to deliver such a high profile event.

Sønderborg

The motto of the bid was “Countryside Metropolis” and the programme focused on 3 themes:

- Connect
- Confront
- Celebrate

The motto did not refer to a physical place, but aimed at demonstrating that a dynamic, open-minded, and creative way of life is possible in a rural area. Indeed, one of the slogans of the bid was "Provincial is cool". The motivation to apply for the ECOC 2017 was based on four problems the region is facing such as young people leaving the region and consequent shortage of skilled professional workers, the poor image of the countryside and borderland periphery, fear of diversity amongst the local population and the lingering Danish-German historical resentments that caused stagnation. The Panel found that the approach chosen by Sønderborg to combine the advantages of rural life with those of a (cultural) metropolis was presented in a convincing way.

The Panel found that Sønderborg had a very strong potential and outstanding European dimension. This is partly due to the way the Danish and German citizens, politicians etc. get along and socialize with each other across the border in their daily lives and thus present themselves as inhabitants of a truly European region. The Panel was also impressed by the drive, eagerness and energy of the city and the region. This positive cross-border attitude is a potential role model for the EU where many citizens live in border areas.

The local artists in Sønderborg and in the region are longing for change and cultural development, and the Panel noted that the project of Sønderborg addressed these issues by focusing on the need for cooperation, co-creation and involvement of local artists.

Decision

All members of the Selection Panel praised both Aarhus and Sønderborg for their exemplary work to provide compelling bids for the ECOC 2017 title and thanked them for

their efforts to provide it with extensive information about their projects at the pre-selection and the final selection phase, including the visits.

During the final deliberations of the Panel, the strengths and weaknesses of different aspects of the applications as viewed by the panel members were assessed very carefully as were the findings of the delegates who had been visiting the cities. The discussion focused on the criteria laid down in Article 4 of the Decision, on the quality and sustainability of the cultural programmes as well as on the capacity of each pre-selected city to deliver a successful event in line with the high standard requirements and visibility of the ECOC title.

Following the debate *and vote*, the Panel concluded that one candidate city best met the objectives and criteria of the European Capital of Culture event, and that it provided the best potential and capacity for a successful implementation of the event. The Panel therefore recommends that the following city be designated as the Danish European Capital of Culture 2017:

Aarhus.

In addition to the European and participatory assets of the Aarhus bid, the panel particularly appreciated the existing and demonstrated active cultural policy and its implementation, the demonstrated ability to manage large projects and the involvement of a wide range of local stakeholders in the city and in the region through the widely-spread bottom-up process of the preparation of the bid.

The Selection Panel recommended Sønderborg to take maximum advantage of the work undertaken in preparation of and during the competition by continuing the co-operation with the cultural sector and considering it as an important actor in the city's and the region's development.

5. Recommendations of the Selection Panel to the nominated city

In accordance with article 8, paragraph 4 of the Decision, the Panel makes the following recommendations to Aarhus regarding the progress to be made and the work to be carried out in advance of 2017:

Aarhus has been recommended for the title due to a convincing artistic programme, the strong and wide commitment of the city of Aarhus and cities in the region, and the demonstration of a strong management team. However, the Panel underlined that the project needs further improvement.

The Panel recommends Aarhus:

- to further develop and strengthen the European dimension of the project. It should consider the city's development in a broader European context by developing European co-operation and connections based on subjects and themes than on mere co-operation between cultural operators from different European countries. It should

clarify further the artistic themes it will bring out to highlight Europe's cultural diversity on the one hand, as well as European culture's common features on the other;

- to clarify further its desired outcomes, and to concretise the actual programme content of the "Re-think" concept, which is a very process-driven approach; This will be essential in order for Aarhus to monitor progress against milestones. Without concrete outcomes the evaluation will be weak. The Monitoring Panel would like to see a first draft at the informal briefing in late 2013. (see below);
- to review its communication strategy and budget. Its current proposed budget is under the norm from previous ECOCs. It should develop a clear strategy of how best to communicate the "Re-think" vision to the public and to make available sufficient funding for the communication of the overall project as well as the different parts of the programme;
- to consider the ECOC title as an opportunity to enhance its local development and to strengthen its European connections, and not only see the ECOC year as part of the city's communication strategy.

The Panel stressed the importance of ensuring stable governance throughout the preparation phase, from the selection through to the implementation of the event, with a clear division of responsibilities and coherence within the team.

It also emphasised the need for a stable budget, with clear and firm commitments from all the public authorities involved, including the national government, from the very beginning of the preparation phase.

The Panel would welcome efforts by Aarhus to cooperate with Sønderborg in joint projects in the future.

The Panel stressed the requirement of displaying the official logo of the European Capital of Culture title on any communication material (online, print, other media) regarding the event. This requirement helps to indicate the European rather than just the Danish, nature of the ECOC label.

6. Next steps towards the designation

In accordance with Article 8 of the Decision, the present report has been submitted to the Commission and to the Ministry of Culture in Denmark and shall be published on the Commission's website.

The Ministry of Culture in Denmark will formally nominate one city for the European Capital of Culture title for 2017 in Denmark on the basis of this report and will notify

the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the Committee of Regions by the end of the year 2012 at the latest. The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the European Commission within three months after it receives the nomination.

The Council of the European Union, upon a recommendation of the European Commission drawn up based on the opinion of the European Parliament and the justification based on the Selection Panel's report, will formally designate the European Capital of Culture 2017 in Denmark.

7. Monitoring phase

In accordance with Article 10 of the Decision, the 2017 European Capitals of Culture, once designated by the EU Council of Ministers, will be submitted to a monitoring phase until the beginning of the event.

The Monitoring and advisory Panel will be comprised of the seven members designated by the European Institutions. Aarhus shall be invited to an informal monitoring meeting in late 2013 (roughly six months after designation). The first formal monitoring meeting will take place by late 2014 and the final one by spring 2016.

On the basis of the report issued by the Monitoring and advisory Panel after its second meeting, a Prize "in honour of Melina Mercouri" shall be awarded by the Commission provided that the city meets the criteria of the action and has implemented the recommendations made by the Selection and the Monitoring and advisory Panels. The award of the Melina Mercouri Prize by the European Commission is not automatic.

The Prize shall be monetary and shall be awarded in principle – if all necessary conditions are met – three months before the start of the relevant year, that is, by September 2016 for the 2017 title.

Copenhagen, September 2012.

The Selection Panel

Manfred Gaulhofer, Chair

Christine Buhl Andersen, Vice-chair

Constantin Chiriac

Elisabeth Vitouch

Erna Hennicot-Schoepges

Henrik Bo Nielsen

Jens Kvorning

Jeremy Isaacs

Jordi Pardo

Karsten Ohrt

Katrine Ring

Per B. Christensen

Steve Green

List of participants of the representatives from Aarhus and Sønderborg

Representatives from Aarhus

- Jacob Bundsgaard, Mayor, Aarhus Municipality
- Marc Perera Christensen, Alderman, Culture and Citizens' Services, Aarhus Municipality
- Erik Sejersen, Head of Division, Regional Development, Central Denmark Region
- Jette Gejl Kristensen, Member of the Arts Council of Aarhus Municipality, visual artist
- Purnima Kumarathas, Chairman of council for integration, Aarhus Municipality
- Turid Fennefoss Nielsen, Chief Editor, Aarhus Stiftstidende
- Anders Byriel, Managing Director, Kvadrat A/S
- Allan Aagaard, Regional Director, Danske Bank
- Anne Mette Zachariassen, Manager at Højskolen for Kreative Erhverv, VIA University College
- Trevor Davies, Project Manager, Aarhus 2017.

Representatives from Sønderborg

- Aase Nyegaard, Mayor of Sønderborg
- Else Christensen Redzepovic, Director of the Sønderborg candidacy
- Sue McCauley, Artistic director of the Sønderborg candidacy
- John Frederiksen, Director of the Center for Culture Sønderborg
- Ann Fenech, Young scientist
- Mikkel Harder Munk Hansen, Director of the Images Festival
- Elisa Priester, Creative producer S2017
- Jesper Jacobsen, Young musician (Ludwig van) and Danish minority member
- Claudia Mayer, 2017 Creative Producer (observer)
- Henriette Pilegaard, 2017 Communications Manager (observer)